

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the non-final Office Action dated January 3, 2007, issued in connection with the above-identified application. Presently, claims 1, 2, 5 and 7-13 are pending in the present application. With this Response, independent claims 1 and 7-9 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced by this Response. Thus, favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Applicants thank Examiner Roswell for granting the interview conducted on March 22, 2007, with the Applicants' representative. During the interview, the rejections to independent claims 1 and 7-9 were discussed in more detail. It was noted, during the interview, that the cited references fail to disclose a storage means for storing at least one list of users associated with a *chat session within the user space*, wherein the list of users is generated by the first user and includes at least one second user denied admission to the user space and at least one second user granted admission to the user space. It was also agreed that the independent claims should be amended to point out this feature. At the conclusion of the interview, the Examiner indicated that the suggested claim amendments would likely overcome the cited references, but he also indicated that further search and consideration would be required before reaching a determination on allowability.

Claims 1, 2, 5 and 7-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Estrada et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,732,148, hereafter "Estrada") and Hatlelid et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,772,195, hereafter "Hatlelid"). The Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Independent claims 1 and 7-9 have been amended to be consistent with the recommendations made during the Examiner Interview conducted on March 22, 2007. In particular, the independent claims have been amended to point out that the claimed storage means stores at least one list of users associated with a *chat session* within the user space, wherein the list includes at least one user denied admission to the user space and at least one user granted admission to the user space. (see Applicants' Application, Fig. 6). Thus, a user is either denied or granted access to the chat session based on his or her presence on the list.

To the contrary, Estrada discloses a system and method for interconnecting secure rooms for allowing users to collaborate on a common work product. For example, users having access

authorization (e.g., read, edit and manage) can access a common room, wherein each room is made up of a plurality of pages. (see Estrada, col. 5, lines 60-65). Each user, having the appropriate access, can collaborate in reading, editing and managing the pages in the room. Thus, although Estrada implements a form of access security to the room (e.g., read, edit and manage), the access security is not related to a list of users participating in a virtual chart session. Additionally, as correctly noted by the Examiner, Estrada also fails to disclose the claimed "notifying means," "determining means" and "control means" of the present invention. (see Office Action, page 3).

Moreover, Hatlelid fails to overcome all the deficiencies noted above in Estrada. For example, although Hatlelid discloses the use of chat clusters in a virtual world, the reference fails to disclose the use of *a list of users associated with a chat session within the user space for granting or denying access to the chat session*. In fact, at best, Hatlelid discloses a real-time notification and permission system for granting or denying access to a chat session. (see Hatlelid, col. 7, lines 18-56).

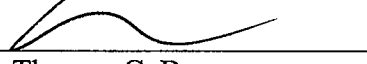
Therefore, even if it were proper for one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the teachings of Estrada and Hatlelid, the combination still would not teach or suggest all the features recited in claims 1 and 7-9 (as amended). For at least these reasons, independent claims 1 and 7-9 are distinguished over the cited references. Likewise, dependent claims 2, 5 and 10-13 are distinguished over the cited prior references based on their respective dependencies from independent claims 1 and 9.

In light of the above, the Applicants submit that claims 1, 2, 5 and 7-13 are patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

If any additional fees are due in connection with this application as a whole, the Director is authorized to deduct such fees from deposit account no. 02-1818.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: March 30, 2007